

ST. MARYS AND ST. JOE RIVERS, IDAHO.

LETTER

FROM

THE SECRETARY OF WAR,

TRANSMITTING,

WITH A LETTER FROM THE CHIEF OF ENGINEERS, REPORT ON
PRELIMINARY EXAMINATION OF ST. MARYS AND ST. JOE
RIVERS, IDAHO.

MAY 20, 1914.—Referred to the Committee on Rivers and Harbors and ordered to be
printed, with illustration.

WAR DEPARTMENT,
Washington, May 18, 1914.

The SPEAKER OF THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES.

SIR: I have the honor to transmit herewith a letter from the Chief of Engineers, United States Army, dated May 14 instant, together with copy of a report from Maj. J. B. Cavanaugh, Corps of Engineers, dated February 27, 1914, with map, upon a preliminary examination of St. Marys and St. Joe Rivers, Idaho, made by him in compliance with the provisions of the river and harbor act approved July 25, 1912.

Very respectfully,

LINDLEY M. GARRISON,
Secretary of War.

WAR DEPARTMENT,
OFFICE OF THE CHIEF OF ENGINEERS,
Washington, May 14, 1914.

From: The Chief of Engineers, United States Army.

To: The Secretary of War.

Subject: Preliminary examination of St. Marys and St. Joe Rivers, Idaho.

1. There is submitted herewith, for transmission to Congress, report dated February 27, 1914, with map, by Maj. J. B. Cavanaugh, Corps of Engineers, on preliminary examination of St. Marys and St. Joe Rivers, Idaho, called for by the river and harbor act approved Jul 25, 1912.

2. No previous examinations of these rivers have been made by this department. The St. Marys (or St. Maries) River is a small mountain stream which rises in the southwestern corner of Shoshone County, Idaho, and empties into the St. Joe River in Kootenai County, Idaho. It is not navigable for boats, and its only use for navigation is for the floating of logs during freshets. There appears to be no desire for its improvement. The St. Joe River rises in the eastern portion of Shoshone County and empties into Lake Coeur d'Alene in Kootenai County, Idaho. The total navigable portion of the river is 32 miles in length from the mouth to the town of Ferrell. The present channel depth and width are ample for steamboat navigation. The improvement apparently desired is the protection of the banks between St. Maries and Ferrell, where they have been damaged by action of waves from wind and from passing steamers, and the construction of levees to prevent overflow of adjacent lands along the lower portion of the river. The district officer states that neither of these improvements is required in the interests of navigation, and he expresses the opinion that the St. Marys and St. Joe Rivers are not worthy of improvement by the United States. In this opinion the division engineer concurs.

3. This report has been referred, as required by law, to the Board of Engineers for Rivers and Harbors, and attention is invited to its report herewith, dated May 6, 1914, concurring with the views of the district officer and the division engineer.

4. After due consideration of the above-mentioned reports, I concur with the views of the district officer, the division engineer, and the Board of Engineers for Rivers and Harbors, and therefore report that the improvement by the United States of St. Marys and St. Joe Rivers, Idaho, is not deemed advisable at this time.

DAN C. KINGMAN,
Chief of Engineers, United States Army.

REPORT OF THE BOARD OF ENGINEERS FOR RIVERS AND HARBORS.

[Third indorsement.]

BOARD OF ENGINEERS FOR RIVERS AND HARBORS,
May 6, 1914.

To the CHIEF OF ENGINEERS, UNITED STATES ARMY:

1. This is a report of preliminary examination of St. Marys and St. Joe Rivers, Idaho, called for by the act of July 25, 1912.

2. The St. Marys (or St. Maries) River is a small mountain stream emptying into the St. Joe River about 15 miles above the mouth of the latter in Lake Coeur d'Alene. It is not navigable for boats, and from the investigations of the district officer it appears that no improvement of this stream is desired.

3. The St. Joe River is navigable for a distance of 32 miles from its mouth to the town of Ferrell. On the lower 15 miles the width is 300 to 600 feet, with a navigable depth of not less than 10 feet, except over the bar at the mouth, where the depth is 7 feet at low water. On the upper 17 miles the channel width is from 100 to 300 feet, with depths exceeding 10 feet, except over a single rock reef a short distance below

the town of St. Joe, near the head of navigation. A steamboat company has blasted a channel through this reef, giving a navigable waterway about 50 feet wide and 6 feet deep at low water. There is considerable traffic on the St. Joe River, it being reported that 150,000 passengers and 60,000 tons of freight are carried per annum.

4. There are no obstructions in the river, and the channel depth and width are ample for steamboat navigation. It appears, however, that the banks in the upper part of the river are soft and subject to some erosion, and riparian owners desire that these banks be protected. The district officer states that while bank erosion is objectionable from the standpoint of the property owner, it does not materially interfere with navigation.

5. In the absence of any real necessity for better navigation facilities, the district officer reports that the improvement of either the St. Marys or the St. Joe River is not worthy of being undertaken by the United States, and in this view the division engineer concurs.

6. Interested parties were informed of the district officer's unfavorable report and given an opportunity of submitting their views to the board, but no statements in favor of the improvement have been received.

7. From the information now in hand it appears that these rivers have no navigable connection with waters outside the State of Idaho; that the St. Marys River is a small mountain stream, not navigable for boats, and that no improvement is desired; that the St. Joe River is now in good navigable condition, with adequate widths and depths, and that no improvement is required for navigation. In view of these conditions, the board concurs with the district officer and the division engineer and reports that in its opinion it is not advisable for the United States at this time to undertake the improvement of the St. Marys and St. Joe Rivers, Idaho.

8. In compliance with law, the board reports that there are no questions of terminal facilities, water power, or other related subjects which could be coordinated with the suggested improvement in such manner as to render the work advisable in the interests of commerce and navigation.

For the board:

W. M. BLACK,
*Colonel, Corps of Engineers,
Senior Member of the Board.*

PRELIMINARY EXAMINATION OF ST. MARYS AND ST. JOE RIVERS,
IDAHO.

UNITED STATES ENGINEER OFFICE,
Seattle, Wash., February 27, 1914.

From: The District Engineer Officer.

To: The Chief of Engineers, United States Army
(Through the Division Engineer).

Subject: Preliminary examination of St. Marys and St. Joe Rivers,
Idaho.

1. In compliance with section 2, river and harbor act of July 25, 1912, and instructions contained in your letters dated August 3, 1912, and September 24, 1912, respectively, I have to submit the following

report of a preliminary examination of the St. Marys and St. Joe Rivers, Idaho, with map, as required.

2. The examination was made in September, 1912, by Mr. W. T. Preston, assistant engineer, who traveled over the navigable portion of the St. Joe River and interviewed vessel men and others interested as to existing conditions and the character of improvements desired.

The map was compiled from existing county maps and a map of Washington Water Power Co.

No previous examinations of these rivers have ever been made.

3. The St. Marys (or St. Maries) River is a small mountain stream which rises in the southwestern corner of Shoshone County, Idaho, in about latitude 47° N. and longitude $116^{\circ} 15'$ W., and flows in a general northwesterly direction, emptying into the St. Joe River at about latitude $47^{\circ} 20'$ N., longitude $116^{\circ} 35'$ W., in Kootenai County, Idaho. This stream is not navigable for boats, and its only use for navigation is for the floating of logs during freshets. Its discharge is too small and its slope too steep to justify any improvement for navigation. From those interested in the question of improvements to navigation in this region it was learned that no improvement of the St. Marys River was desired, and it is thought that the Coeur d'Alene and not the St. Marys River should have appeared in the act of Congress directing these examinations.

4. The St. Joe River rises in the eastern portion of Shoshone County, in about latitude $47^{\circ} 15'$ N., longitude $115^{\circ} 35'$ W., and flows in a general westerly direction, emptying into Lake Coeur d'Alene in about latitude $47^{\circ} 20'$ N. and longitude $116^{\circ} 40'$ W., in Kootenai County, Idaho.

So far as could be ascertained, there are at present no obstructions to navigation in the St. Joe River. The total navigable portion of the river is 32 miles in length, from the mouth to the head of navigation at the town of Ferrell. From the mouth of the river to the town of St. Maries, a distance of 15 miles, the channel is from 300 to 600 feet wide, and there is a navigable depth from 10 to more than 30 feet, except over the bar at the mouth of the river, where this depth is about 7 feet at low water. This bar is said to have shoaled extensively during the last 10 years, probably due to the construction of the large boom of the St. Joe Boom Co., and the reduction of currents which has probably resulted from the conversion of Lake Coeur d'Alene into a storage reservoir for water-power purposes by the construction of a controlling dam at its outlet, but the depth is still sufficient for all purposes of navigation. From St. Maries to the town of Ferrell, 17 miles, the channel is from 100 to 300 feet in width, with ample depth, exceeding 10 feet, except over a single rock reef a short distance below the town of St. Joe. The steamboat company has blasted a channel through this reef about 50 feet wide and 6 feet deep at low water, which serves all practical purposes. The lower section of the St. Joe River is practically a long, narrow arm of Lake Coeur d'Alene, with no perceptible current, and during high water in the lake the river near its mouth spreads out over the low marshes and meadows adjacent for a width of about a mile, as indicated on the accompanying map.

Above the town of Ferrell the river is not navigable, being a small, swift, precipitous mountain stream similar to the St. Marys River.

5. From St. Maries to Ferrell the river banks are composed of a light volcanic ash, easily eroded, and they have been damaged by the action of waves from the wind and from passing steamers. Therefore owners of the lands bordering the river are naturally desirous that the banks be protected so that no more land will be washed away, and some work has been done by local interests toward the construction of brush revetments to prevent further erosion.

6. The Federal Government has never improved this river, and no hydrographic surveys have been made; it is therefore impossible to determine accurately the changes in regimen, if any, that have occurred in recent years affecting the depths of channels, position of bars, and other navigation features. While continued bank erosion might in time cause a reduction in the present ample depths of channel, no such result seems likely to occur in the near future, except possibly at the mouth of the river.

7. The construction of bank protection has at times been undertaken by the United States where necessary for the protection of navigable channels, but the usual conditions precedent to such expenditures do not exist on the St. Joe River. The channel is wide, deep, and fixed in position, and bank erosion, while objectionable from the standpoint of the riparian owners, will never materially interfere with navigation, and any expenditures for protection of banks would not be justified in the interests of navigation.

8. While the flood variation is not large, the country adjacent to the lower river is very low and is flooded at high water. Since the flooding of the adjacent lands does not in any way interfere with navigation, the construction of the necessary levees to prevent such overflow, while desired by local interests, is also not necessary in the interests of navigation.

This flooding has been the subject of extensive litigation against the Washington Water Power Co., which maintains the controlling dam at the outlet of Lake Coeur d'Alene, it being claimed that flood damage has been increased by the operations of this company.

9. The Red Collar Steamship Line, which operates a fleet of steamers on Lake Coeur d'Alene, maintains a daily boat service on the St. Joe River throughout the year, and in the summer, when the tourist travel is heavy, six of the large passenger steamers call at St. Maries each day, smaller vessels operating above this point. A statement of the traffic handled by this company is contained in the letter of the manager submitted herewith as Exhibit A.¹

While this traffic is quite large, stated by him to comprise 150,000 passengers and 60,000 tons of freight per annum, no improvement of navigable channels is apparently necessary to facilitate the movement of vessels or to reduce the cost of transportation.

10. The main line of the Chicago, Milwaukee & St. Paul Railroad follows along the entire length of the valley of the St. Joe River on its southern bank.

From the mouth to St. Joe there are neither ferries nor fords crossing the stream, and no bridges except that of the Oregon-Washington Railroad & Navigation Co.; therefore the steamers furnish the only means of communication to the settlers on the north bank of the river. Terminal facilities exist at St. Joe, St. Maries, and at the

¹ Not printed.

booming grounds at the mouth of the river. Steamers land along the banks wherever wanted, and no additional terminal facilities are needed.

As the territory adjacent to the St. Joe River below St. Maries, formerly an Indian reservation, has been recently opened to settlement, the construction of roads, bridges and ferries should soon bring about improved conditions as to means of transportation.

11. It may be noted that, although jurisdiction has been assumed by the War Department in approving plans for certain structures in the St. Joe River and Lake Coeur d'Alene, there seems to be a reasonable doubt whether this lake and its two tributaries under consideration can be legally considered as navigable waters of the United States, since they have no actual navigable connection with any navigable waters outside the boundaries of the State of Idaho, the Spokane River being unnavigable below Post Falls, Idaho.

12. In view of existing conditions, and the absence of any real necessity for better facilities for navigation, it is not believed that the improvement of either the St. Marys or the St. Joe River is a work worthy of being undertaken by the United States.

13. In compliance with law, I have to report also that the development and use of water power in the sections of rivers under consideration can not be coordinated with any improvement of navigation so as to reduce its cost and render such improvement advisable.

J. B. CAVANAUGH,
Major, Corps of Engineers.

[First indorsement.]

UNITED STATES ENGINEER OFFICE,
NORTHERN PACIFIC DIVISION,
San Francisco, Cal., March 30, 1914.

To the CHIEF OF ENGINEERS, UNITED STATES ARMY:

1. Concurring in the views expressed by the district engineer officer.

THOS. H. REES,
Lieutenant Colonel, Corps of Engineers,
Division Engineer.

[For report of the Board of Engineers for Rivers and Harbors see page 2.]

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EXAMINATION OF ST. JOE AND ST. MARIES RIVERS, IDAHO.

Prepared under direction of Major J. B. CAVANAUGH,
Corps of Engineers, U.S. Army,
V. T. Preston, Assistant Engineer —
Scale 1 inch = 1 mile.

Note: That portion of the map within the Coeur d'Alene Indian Reservation is from a survey made for the Washington Water Power Co. by A. A. Turner, C.E. Jan. 29 to Mar. 16, 1908. Elevations thereon are above mean sea level of the U.S. Geological Survey. The portion of the map east of the reservation is from a map of Kootenai County.

U.S. Engineer Office, Seattle, Washington.
With report of Feb. 27, 1914 to the Chief
of Engineers.

J. B. Cavanaugh
Major, Corps of Engineers,
U.S. Army.

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